

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 14-26 are pending and are indicated to be allowable if formalities can be overcome.

Applicants appreciate the helpful suggestions of the Examiner for improving the claims. Turning to the Office Action, the paragraphing of the Examiner is adopted.

1. Claim Objections

Claims 25 and 26 are objected to because claims 25 and 26 are essentially identical to claim 14 except for the preamble. In claims 25 and 26, the recitation "planetary" and "inspection of surfaces of industrially manufactured components" respectively, have not been given patentable weight because the recitation occurs in the preamble.

In response, Applicants amend the body of the claim to refer to the specific surfaces for which elevation profiles or relief of structures are being determined.

2-3. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph

Claims 14, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. "Preparing images" as claimed in claims 14, 25 and 26 are not described in the specification.

In response, Applicant has amended the claims to recite "recording" based on paragraph [0008] of the specification.

4-10. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph

Claims 14, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. According to the Examiner, in claims 14, 25 and 26, from the recitation "preparing images ... from a camera position" it is not clear what the intended process step is.

In response, Applicants have amended the claims to refer to recording images from a camera position using a camera. The term "camera" is intended to be broadly understood as defined in paragraph [00029] of the specification.

Further, according to the Examiner it is not clear how or where the images were

obtained. It is not entirely clear if images are provided by a camera or some other source(s) such as a database which has been created previously. This has made the claims vague and indefinite.

In response, Applicants amend the claims to clarify that the images are the images recorded in the previous step.

According to the Examiner, claim 18 recites the limitation "the binary-connected-component" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. There is no prior reference of a "binary-connected-component" in the claim or in any of the parent claim(s).

In response, Applicants point out that this claim merely refers to the known "binary connected component" (BCC) analysis of quotient images as explained in the specification (see E. Mandler, M. Oberlaender: One Pass Encoding of Connected Components in Multi-Valued Images, IEEE Int. Conf. on Pattern Recognition, pp. 64-69, Atlantic City, 1990). Nevertheless, to expedite allowance, Applicants amend the claim to delete the term "the".

According to the Examiner, Claim 21 recites the limitation "the shape-from-shading method" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. There is no prior reference of a "shape-from-shading method" in the claim or in any of the parent claim(s).

In response, Applicants advise that "shape-from-shading" is a known technique (see X. Jiang, H. Bunke, Three Dimensional Computer Vision, Springer Publishers, Berlin 1997), but to expedite allowance, delete "the" and insert "a" in the claim.

According to the Examiner Claim 22 recites the limitation "the above explained shadow analysis" in line 8. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. There is no prior reference of a "shadow analysis" in the claim or in any of the parent claim(s).

In response, Applicants amend the claim to explicitly recite the intended language from claim 14.

According to the Examiner, in Claim 23 in the recitation "this is improved" (on line 2), it is not what "this" refers to. This has made the claims vague and indefinite.

In response, Applicants amend claim 23 for clarity based on paragraph [0017] of the

specification.

Finally, according to the Examiner Claim 24 recites the limitation "the result" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. There is no prior reference of a "result" in the claim or in any of the parent claim(s).

In response, Applicants explain that the result referred to was the result of the process according to claim 22. Rather than refer to both claims 22 and 23 in claim 24, Applicants incorporate claim 23 into claim 24, and refer to the process of claim 22, whereby claim 24 remains single dependant.

Claims 15-17 and 19-20 are rejected because they are dependent on a rejected base claim and they have all the deficiencies of the respective parent claim inherent in them.

Applicants appreciate this indication. In view of the correction of the parent claims, indication of allowability of all claims is respectfully requested.

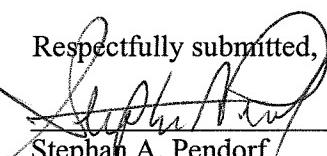
12-13. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that Claims 14-26 would be allowable if the objections and rejections of the claims detailed above can be overcome. It is respectfully submitted that the above amendments and remarks place the application in condition for allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required at any time during the prosecution of this application without specific authorization, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 16-0877.

Should further issues remain prior to allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the indicated telephone number.

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Respectfully submitted,


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